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CHFS Focus Special Report: CHFS launches new Web site

We're at T minus 144 hours and counting... or thereabouts, and all is well in mission control. All indicators remain green for launch of the new, improved CHFS Web site. The team is preparing with a go-no go readiness poll:

"CHFS Web site Controllers, listen up. We need a go, no-go for launch. Site Editors."

"Go."

"Content Providers."

"Go."

"Information Officers."

"We're go, flight."

"Resource Managers."

"Resource Managers are go."

"Channel Managers."

"Go flight."

"Secretary's Office."

"We're a go."

"Information Technology."

"Go."

"Kentucky Interactive."

"Go!"

*"Launch Control, this is Frankfort. **WE ARE GO FOR LAUNCH!**"*



**The new CHFS
Internet Web site
can be viewed after
Feb. 1 at:
CHFS.ky.gov**

At noon, Tuesday Feb. 1, the new CHFS Internet Web site, CHFS.ky.gov, will go live with new features that make the site easier to navigate and more attractive, informative and useful to both employees and the public we serve.

According to Deputy Secretary Delanor Manson, the new Web site is much more than simply a move to combine the online information provided by the two former cabinets into one comprehensive site.

"The new site is an exciting, information-rich resource that enhances our ability to both perform the Cabinet's many duties and to engage our clients and all the people in Kentucky and beyond who visit the Web site," Manson said. "The new site is a reflection of a united Cabinet sharing a single vision of service that is highly efficient, effective and responsive."

The merged site looks good – it has a uniform appearance and 'feel' throughout. There are multiple navigation points on each page, including links that take visitors back to a previous page or to the home page.

An internal Google search function allows users to enter terms and search just the CHFS site for information they need. The Cabinet's home page will list and link to the

"Top Hit Sites" that are most frequently accessed by visitors. The list will be updated as the most-viewed pages change.

The site also provides a "How do I...?" link to answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs), like "How do I adopt a child?" and "How do I get a birth certificate?" All program areas in the Cabinet provided the three most frequently asked questions about their work which were used to develop the "How do I...?" FAQs and answers.

The site is designed to make it quick and easy for users to get where they want to go. Most users will be able to find the page they're looking for in three or fewer mouse clicks.

There are multiple options for locating information. For instance, if visitors know the name of the department, they can click on the 'Agencies/Departments' link in the menu across the top of each page and drill down through the organization structure to find that office site.

For those who don't know a department name, a menu along the left side of each page lists program and service categories which are linked to corresponding site pages.

A site map as well as the internal search engine and Top Hit Sites links also help users get the information and help they need.

The site is designed to be viewed on any browser or monitor set at any resolution. A scaled format automatically adjusts to allow visitors whose browsers or monitors are set to view at various text sizes, for instance, to view the site as it is intended to appear.

A feature that's been in place for several months now, CHFS Listens, will still appear and will evolve as feedback indicates. CHFS Listens is basically a 'contact us' email feature visitors can use to ask for information and referrals, make suggestions about Cabinet operations and services and even report fraud, child abuse or other matters for investigation.

Those who have bookmarked or otherwise frequently visit pages on the old CFC and CHS sites will be automatically redirected to the corresponding pages at CHFS.ky.gov.

Finally, focus groups will be used to gather still more input from end users about how to improve the site and make it more user-friendly.

Deputy Secretary Manson said the site overhaul process "has been a challenge, but the end result speaks to the dedication, skill, talent and persistence of many, many CHFS employees who embraced the project and worked very hard to develop an outstanding Web site."

She said too many Web sites are created and launched only to be used and enjoyed by the owners of the site and no

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one else. That's not going to be the case with the CHFS Web site.

"Our Web site is one of our most important marketing tools – it's a communication and service must-have in this hi-tech age," she said. "But the nature of both the work we do and the Internet, demand that we continue to make changes, improve, strengthen and expand the site and the services it offers to make sure it provides real value to our employees, our clients and the public at large."

Toward the goal of continuous quality improvement, CHFS employees are encouraged to provide feedback about the Web site.

There will be a link to an evaluation feedback form on each page of the site where visitors, especially CHFS employees, can report dead links and errors and make other suggestions to improve the site.

Cabinet employees are also encouraged to get family and friends to visit the site and offer their feedback.

"The new CHFS Web site will add value to our work by saving time, improving communication, promoting Cabinet values and streamlining access to services," Manson said. "And the greatest inspiration for continuing to improve the site will be the feedback we get from CHFS employees. I hope each one will take time to visit the site, look around and let us know what works, what doesn't and what they'd like to see on the site. That will mean the difference between our site being just another Web site and a truly meaningful resource."

On Feb. 1, use this link to check out the new [CHFS Web site](#).

CHFS Focus Employee Spotlight: Commissioner Mike Robinson values DCBS staff

By Anya Armes Weber

Overseeing a department of 16 regions with at least one office in all 120 counties, Mike Robinson keeps focused on what guides daily work for him and his almost 5,000 staff.

"We're here to make an impact for our customers," he said.

Robinson is the commissioner of the cabinet's Department for Community Based Services, the agency responsible for child and adult protection, foster care and adoption and services to enhance family self-sufficiency -- like child support, food stamps and cash assistance -- and determining Medicaid eligibility.



"Except for good fortune, most of us are one catastrophic event from being on Medicaid or in need of some services we provide," Robinson said. "I try to get staff to think about the way they'd like to be treated if they were on the other side of the desk."

Robinson previously served as Medicaid commissioner and helped oversee cost containment measures.

He has served in several other state government positions, including commissioner of Social Insurance, deputy personnel commissioner and executive director of the Office of Administrative Services in the Governor's Office for Technology. He has also worked as a private human services consultant.

Robinson is a strong advocate of giving credit for good work. He is reinstating the Paul T. Grannis awards for family services workers after a two-year absence. Family support workers will have open nominations for a similar award this spring, Robinson said.

Last year Robinson initiated departmentwide employee recognition program, where staff representing every level were not only praised, they received professional development training as part of a regular Service Region Administrators meeting.

"We want to recognize people at every level of the organization," he said. "It takes all of us to help families."

He plans to make the recognition program a regular event.

"When employees feel good about their jobs, it will engender higher quality services," he said.

The year after the cabinet consolidation has been a time for evaluation of office policies and procedures, he said.

"If something is done in the local office that doesn't improve the quality of service for families, then why do it? Processes should be eliminated or changed if they do not contribute to positive outcomes for our families."

Robinson said one of the biggest issues facing the department and its customers is coping with and treating substance abuse.

"Substance abuse is a drain on the whole network of social services programs," he said. "It's a black hole. It utilizes all the resources, and there's nothing left to spend on more constructive programs."

Robinson said Governor Ernie Fletcher has made a "major step" in addressing drug addiction by creating a statewide drug task force, led by Lieutenant Governor and Justice Cabinet Secretary Steve Pence. "He's made it one of his priorities," he said.

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Robinson was recently appointed to the Kentucky Employees Credit Union's Board of Directors, a position he'll be up for reelection for in April.

He lives in Frankfort with his wife Jerri, who works for the Office of the Inspector General.

CHFS Program Spotlight: A Full Stop Smoking Class

The Cooper Clayton Method to Stop Smoking class being held in the CHFS facility has reached its maximum number of 27 participants. "We were hoping for a great turnout and we've gotten it!" says Irene Centers, Program Manager for the Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program. "We've already started a list of people interested in the possibility of another class."

"We hate turning people away, but it is important to control class size so that we can optimize the benefits of the program," explained Centers. Controlling class size helps to create a more intimate atmosphere for program participants to share their experiences in struggling with nicotine addiction. The classes are being facilitated by Karen Thompson of the Franklin County Health Department each Friday at lunchtime.

The Cooper/Clayton Method is a twelve week stop smoking program that incorporates nicotine replacement products like the patch or gum with behavior modification to help people overcome the addiction to nicotine.

Group camaraderie also plays an important role; people can look to each other for support and understanding. "Everyone participating in this group has the same goal – they want to quit" explains Centers. "That makes each of them a role model for the others."

"Quitting is hard," says Jan Beauchamp, Program Coordinator for the Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program. "No one really wants to quit, but they know it is something they should do." More restrictions on the places where smokers can smoke and the rising costs of cigarettes have helped many to realize the importance of quitting.

Beauchamp hopes they are able to focus on the health benefits of quitting instead of what they are giving up. Tobacco use and dependence remains the leading preventable cause of death in Kentucky and the nation – killing nearly 8,000 Kentuckians each year.

This is a pilot project with funding being provided by the Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program. Continuation of the program will depend on the availability of funds and interest in the program.

The Cooper/Clayton Method was developed in 1985 by Drs. Thomas Cooper and Richard Clayton in conjunction with the Kentucky Cancer Program.

Earned Income Tax Credit may increase refund for eligible staff

It's almost that magic time of year again.

Every year near the end of January, state employees receive their W-2's in the mail, triggering a rush of activity to get tax returns in hand as quickly as possible. But before sharpening those pencils or rushing out to pay for tax preparation (and maybe a refund anticipation loan), there are a couple of things you may want to pause to consider.

First, are you eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)? The EITC is a refundable tax credit (Translation: It can be added to the amount of your refund.) available to workers who meet certain income guidelines.

You might be eligible for the EITC if:

- You earned less than \$34,458 and have more than one qualifying child (\$35,458 if married filing jointly);
- You earned less than \$30,338 and have one qualifying child (\$31,338 if married filing jointly); or
- You earned less than \$11,490 and have no qualifying child (\$12,490 if married filing jointly).

In Kentucky, thousands of families each year do not claim the EITC even though they are eligible for it. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) estimates that 25 percent of EITC money available to Kentucky families -- money that can increase the financial health of Kentucky's lower-income families -- is left "on the table."

Is this the first time you've heard of the EITC? Are you thinking "Wow, I could have been eligible last year, too. Maybe even the year before that!" The IRS allows taxpayers to file amended returns for up to three years to go back and claim the EITC.

If your family's income meets the above guidelines, make sure you explore your eligibility.

Something else to keep in mind is the growing number of free tax preparation sites across the state.



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Whether offered by the IRS (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, or VITA, sites) or the AARP (Tax-Aide), volunteers trained in the preparation of basic tax returns will prepare your taxes and help explore eligibility for EITC and other tax credits. Many of these sites can also electronically file your forms, assuring a quick response and eliminating the need for costly refund anticipation loans. Through electronic filing, your refund can be deposited directly into your checking or savings account in as few as seven to 10 days!

Free tax preparation is generally offered to low- to moderate-income families earning \$35,000 or less. Sites are often located in community or neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping centers or other convenient locations. For a complete listing of sites across Kentucky call 800-829-1040 to locate the site nearest you. Be sure to call to set up an appointment and find out what you will need to bring with you.

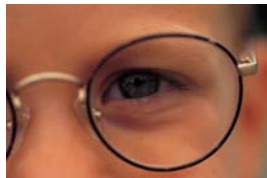
Frankfort staff can learn more during the first week of February, as information regarding the Earned Income Tax Credit will be available in the CHR building's first-floor lobby.

If you have any questions, many of them can be answered from the materials provided by the IRS. If you still have questions, you can contact a free tax preparation site in your area, or call the IRS toll-free at (800) 829-1040. You can also visit the IRS Web site at www.irs.gov.

We hope your new year can start off on the right financial foot with help from the EITC and free tax preparation services.

CHFS Focus Health Tip of the Week: Eye Safety At Home

Believe it or not, the average home is full of dangers that often go unnoticed. In fact, accidents involving common household products cause 125,000 eye injuries each year.



Ninety percent of these eye injuries can be prevented through understanding, safety practices and the use of proper eye protection.

You can reduce the risks of eye injuries for yourself and other family members by using this simple checklist for different areas of your home:

Indoor Safety

- Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Provide lights and handrails to improve safety on stairs.
- Pad or cushion sharp corners and edges of furnishing and home fixtures.
- Install cabinet and drawer locks in kitchens and bathrooms.
- Store personal-use items (cosmetics, toiletry products), kitchen utensils, and desk supplies where children can't reach them.

Outdoor Safety

- Inspect and remove debris from lawns before mowing.
- Keep paints, pesticides, fertilizers, and similar products properly stored in a secure area.
- Keep your tools in good condition; damaged tools should be repaired or replaced.
- Wear safety glasses or dust goggles to protect against flying particles, and chemical goggles to guard against exposure to fertilizers and pesticides.

Chemical Safety

- Wear chemical safety goggles when using hazardous solvents and detergents.
- Read and follow all manufacturer instructions and warning labels.
- Do not mix cleaning agents.
- Know that regular eyeglasses don't always provide enough protection.

Kids' Safety

- Avoid toys with sharp or rigid points, shafts, spikes, rods, and dangerous edges.
- Keep toys intended for older children away from younger children.
- Avoid flying toys and projectile-firing toys; these pose a danger to all children, particularly those less than five years old.
- Beware of items in playgrounds and play areas that pose potential eye hazards.
- Keep BB guns away from kids.
- Use occupant restraints such as infant and child safety seats, booster seats, safety belts, and shoulder harnesses in cars.

For information about eye safety, visit <http://www.preventblindness.org/safety/homesafe.html>.

**Information from the Prevent Blindness America website.*

A pack of tips for quitting

The rising cost of cigarettes and the limitations now being placed on where one can smoke has many people considering quitting. While some people gravitate toward group cessation programs, others prefer to try on their own. Here are 20 tips – one for each cigarette in a pack – to help you quit.



1. Set a quit date and share it with everyone.
2. Take up a new hobby, one that will keep your hands busy: knitting, carpentry, painting.
3. Take up a physical activity or reintroduce yourself to your favorite sport.
4. Find healthful foods that satisfy the oral fixation.
5. Change your routine. Shake things up a bit – eat breakfast for dinner!
6. Wash all your clothes to remove the smell of smoke. Clean carpets and curtains to give the house a fresh start also. And, don't forget your car.
7. Breathe deeply. The American Cancer Society recommends a deep, cleansing breath as one of the best ways to help a craving pass.
8. Drink lots of water and other fluids. Not only will your mouth feel drier than normal after you quit, but water will help flush nicotine from your body.
9. Write down why you want to quit. Read these reasons everyday, as often as necessary to remind yourself that your intentions are stronger than your craving.
10. Eat several small meals, this will maintain blood sugar levels and help prevent the urge to smoke. Be sure to balance calorie intake with physical activity.
11. Get individual, group or phone counseling. The more counseling you have the better your chances of quitting.
12. Patronize only smoke-free restaurants and shops. Inhaling smoky air may trigger a craving; avoid this for a while.
13. Throw away not just your cigarettes but your matches, lighters and ashtrays.
14. Don't pull the trigger. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) notes that all smokers have triggers – certain times and places that make them want to smoke. Figure out what yours are and for the first few weeks avoid them.
15. Be prepared for the urge; the need for a puff IS going to hit. Have a plan of attack before you quit.

16. Pat yourself on the back. When your body is screaming for a smoke, remind yourself how much healthier you'll be for not smoking.

17. Save the money you spend on cigarettes and buy something special.

18. Enjoy the clean taste in your mouth. Brush your teeth often and use mouthwash. If possible, schedule a dental cleaning.

19. Think of how much healthier your children, friends, and neighbors will be because they aren't breathing in your secondhand smoke.

20. Think instant gratification. The CDC reports that your body begins to heal within 20 minutes after your last cigarette. The poison gas and nicotine start to leave your body and your pulse rate goes back to normal.

For more information about smoking cessation, contact the Tobacco Coordinator in your local health department or Irene Centers, Program Manager for the Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program at Irene.Centers@ky.gov or (502)564-7996, Ext. 3808.

Nominations for Paul T. Grannis award due next week

By Anya Armes Weber

Nominations for the Paul T. Grannis award are due next week in the Department for Community Based Services Commissioner's Office.

Regional employees in the family services series or supervisors with direct service experience are eligible for nomination.

Supervisors may nominate staff, and each region is to review its nominations and select one as the regional nominee. Regional nominations must be submitted by Thursday, Feb. 3.

Nominations must be limited to two pages and should include biographical information and a description of the exemplary work of the nominee.

The award honors the memory of Paul Grannis, a Fleming County family services worker who was killed on May 8, 1987, during a child protection investigation. Grannis received the award posthumously that year.

Regional nominees and the Paul T. Grannis award winner will be recognized at a presentation at the May SRA/SRAA meeting. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 18 in Louisville.

Send nominations to Marcia James at Marcia.james@ky.gov or at 275 E. Main St., 3W-A, Frankfort, KY 40621.

For more information about the nominating process, contact James at the above e-mail address or at (502) 564-3703.

Frankfort: Moving Along...

Instead of standing around the water cooler, it's more common these days to find CHFS employees gathered around the *big move* plan drawings located on each floor of the CHR Building in Frankfort. Employees are finding the plans helpful because they can see where they'll be located and who their new neighbors are.



"The floor plans allow everyone to have the chance to get an idea of the overall concept of grouping staff together by work unit and duties so that we can do our jobs more effectively," says Lisa Detherage, director, Division for Facilities Management.

Detherage and her division are responsible for making the *big move* happen and ask employees cooperation in keeping the move on track and as efficiently and cost-effective as possible. To help ensure that the *big move* goes well, please:

- ✓ Refrain from moving your own furniture because movers have been hired to perform that task and there is the very real possibility that you could get hurt in the process and not be covered by workers' compensation. Some furniture already has been inventoried so that currently vacant offices can be furnished and employees moved into those spaces. Skirting the policy for moving furniture sets up an inequity for those that follow the rules. In addition, when employees move themselves and/or are not on the move list for that day, they should not expect to have their phone/computer connected. They will have to wait until their turn in the move sequence for reconnection or they should file a work order request for reconnection.
- ✓ Let your move coordinator know before your scheduled move date if there are unused computers in your current space. IT staff will then ensure that they are removed to wipe/upgrade them so that they will be ready when needed and new computers will not have to be purchased unnecessarily.

- ✓ Leave the patch cables that go from the pole to the computer to connect it to the network and the power strips when you move. The reason for this is that the length already there is what is needed for that particular office/power pole. Removing these items creates a hardship for the person moving into the space and also starts a chain reaction resulting in additional expense.
- ✓ Resist the temptation to ask IT staff to move power poles. Use what is in the office. If there is a problem such as the power pole is standing squarely in the middle of the office and/or one doesn't exist, notify your move coordinator. However, if for example you simply want the pole moved, tell your move coordinator because this is something that may be done at end of the *big move* if appropriate.
- ✓ Don't disconnect/move your phone, which slows the phone reconnection process. By leaving the phone on the desk, it allows the phone techs to use the phone to identify which pod the line runs from for relocation purposes. Without use of the phone it takes longer to relocate/move the line. But, don't worry; you get to keep the same phone and extension. The phone techs will either move your phone or contact you to let you know when you can move it. Place a tag on the phone with your name and extension.

"We want the move to go as smoothly as possible and our objective is to keep on schedule so that we complete the move in a timely manner and allow people to plan their work around the move," says Detherage. "If folks follow the guidelines previously provided in the newsletter plus those above, we should be able to achieve these goals. We truly appreciate your patience and cooperation."

More on the move: Bins available for removal of trash and paper

When it's time to move, many employees find that they have lots of trash and outdated materials discard. Facilities Management employees in the HR Complex are happy to provide garbage and recycling bins to make removal of paper and garbage as easy as possible. Recycle and garbage bins can be brought directly to your office and then removed once you are finished cleaning.



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There are two types of large, wheeled bins available. Garbage bins are gray carts and can be used for anything that is not considered recyclable paper. The blue carts are for recyclable paper materials only. All paper products can be put into these blue bins - including books, newspapers, forms, etc. Paper must be removed from any metal bindings or three-ring binders, but it is not necessary to remove paper clips or staples. There are a handful of blue bins available with locking tops for especially sensitive papers and files. All paper products in the recycle bins will be shredded.

Do not use moving boxes to remove or gather garbage and paper. Moving boxes are limited in number and intended specifically for packing during the move.

Offices are encouraged to plan a time for cleaning and to request these large bins for several employees to use at one time. Please plan ahead and schedule your time so that removal of these items is well in advance of your move date.

To have a garbage bin delivered to your area, contact Alice Clark or Latoya Fields at 564-2640. Recycle bins can be obtained by contacting Richard Manley at 564-9363, Ext. 4245.

manuals? Don't copy another's work, but use similar writings for inspiration.

- Try the letter-writing approach. What would you say to a friend or relative? "Dear Mom and Dad: Here I am in the office struggling to write this program overview. Here's what you may not know about K-TAP." Find your own writing style. It gets easier the more you do it.

Visit us online!

To view the online version of CHFS Focus, visit our web site at <http://chfs.ky.gov/newsletter>. (After February 1, view our newsletter at: <http://chfs.ky.gov/olpa/dc/focus/>)

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber



Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better will focus on team building, customer service and personal development.

Chances are no matter what your job position or classification, you've had to write something for work at least once in the last year. Our professional writing for others is usually intended to inform or persuade them about a project or cause.

Whether you write every day or only occasionally, you know that writer's block can be tough to get around. These five tips may help you tackle it:

- Start anywhere. You can begin in the middle and write your perfect opening later.
- Outline after you draft. Start writing, then map out the basic structure you want to follow.
- Write out your analysis stream-of-consciousness style, then organize it. You may not remember your ideas later.
- Research. What have others written about the same topic? What format does another department use for its